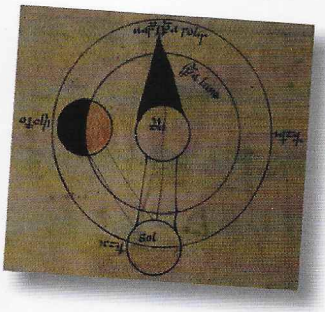
The books are housed in two galleries joined by a small reading room. The glass cases display our current exhibition. You can purchase a copy of the exhibition catalogue from the tour guides.

The **First Gallery** houses 10,000 books which belonged to Edward Stillingfleet, a prominent English clergyman of the late seventeenth century. This collection is particularly strong in its coverage of history, law, politics, classical studies, and science. The founder of the library, Archbishop Narcissus Marsh, bought these books for £2,500 — an enormous sum of money at the time.

The books are in the same position on the shelves in which they were placed three centuries ago. Each bay represents a different subject. For example, the 'J' bay in the first gallery on the left before the glass door holds travel books and atlases. The heaviest books are generally on the lower shelves. The smaller books, generally housed on the higher shelves, tend to be more topical or controversial works.

Through the door is the **Old Reading Room**. When Bram Stoker read here in 1866, and James Joyce visited in 1902, they sat in these very chairs. Today, readers consult our books and manuscripts in a secure reading room located downstairs.

The books in the Old Reading Room belonged to the first Keeper of Marsh's Library, Elias Bouhéreau, a Huguenot who fled religious persecution in France in 1686. Bouhéreau, his wife and seven of his eight children escaped from the port of La Rochelle. When he was made Keeper, his collection of 2,200 books came to the library.



TOP LEFT: A DOODLE IN A BOOK OWNED BY ELIZABETHAN SPY, JOHN DEE.
LEFT: DETAIL FROM A 14TH CENTURY ASTRONOMICAL TREATISE IN IRISH.